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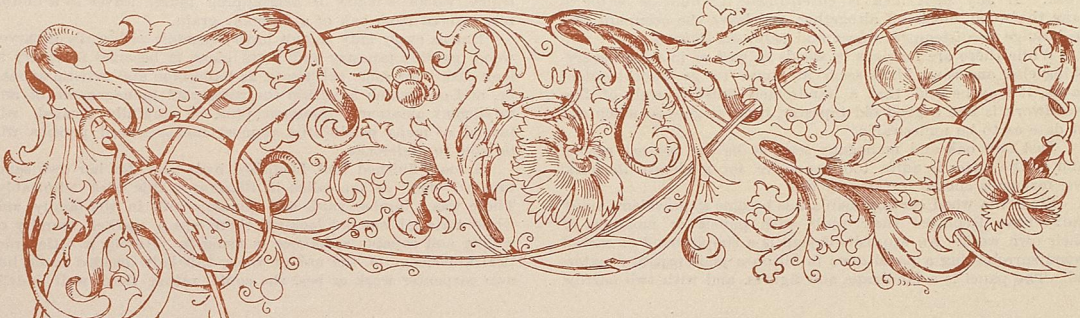
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## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



### WALL DECORATION.

BY EDWARD WILLIS BLAKELEY.

It has often been questioned if wood work is not the most desirable finish for walls. Whether this is so or not depends entirely upon the room, its use and the disposition of the owner or occupant. It requires a fair degree of constancy, more indeed than seems to prevail at the present time, to undertake to occupy a room finished with a material that cannot well be changed, even in color or appearance, for some years at



DESIGN FOR CARD BORDER, BY KARL LEIBIG.

least, for a wood surface once applied is susceptible of very little variation of any sort without danger of entirely destroying the original effect. Especially should all kinds of paint be avoided, as this more than anything else, takes from the beauty of the work. To paint over a wall finished in fine wood is to desecrate nature's handi-



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work. If any such idea is entertained, it would be better to take the wood finish off altogether and leave the occupant free to indulge in distemper, stucco and paint *ad libitum*.

While there are fashions in woods as well as in almost everything else, and some kinds seem at times to go almost out of favor, it may be said that a handsomely finished wall of fine woodwork is like a good old tapestry, it never goes so much out of date as to be undesirable.

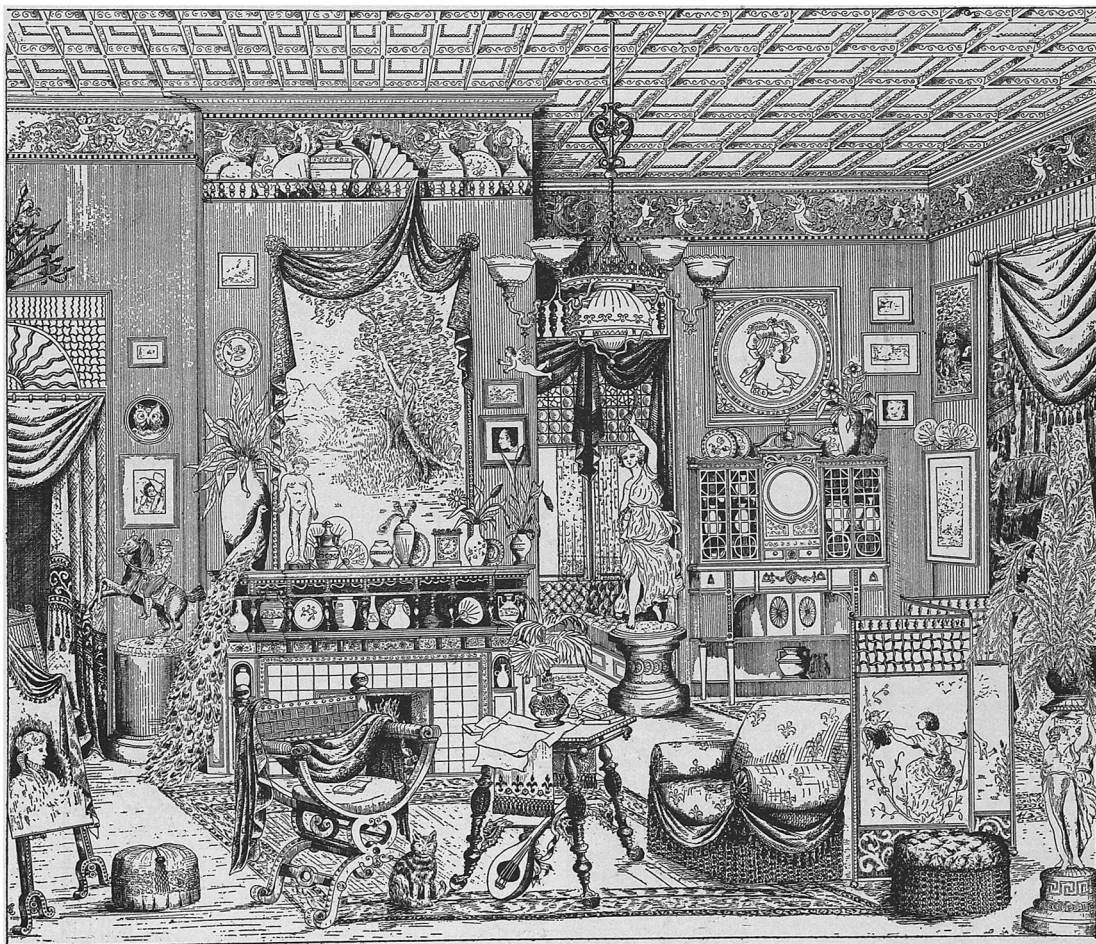
Just now oak and mahogany seem to be the favored woods, and as the latter is quite too expensive for moderate incomes, the former is chosen for general use.

Since the wood carving mania has become so prevalent, many ladies have decorated their walls with panels or moldings of their own work. An exquisite design is a simple band of carved wood surrounding a panel done in oil on a plain tapestry material. The panel is a landscape and figures, and with two narrow

frame, which is made of overlapping laurel leaves in a double row, carved from oak of a different grain.

But as every lady cannot have a boudoir with walls of carved wood, painted tapestry and plate glass, it becomes necessary to look about for some substitute, as handsome and artistic as may be, and one which is within the reach and management of any intelligent amateur. Common pine, if carefully treated, will furnish as many possibilities as most inexperienced persons will be able to undertake.

A room finished and furnished by a lady, for her own sanctum or "den," as she called it, illustrates this idea admirably. There was a lumber yard and planing mill in the family, and while material was not lacking, there was a marked scarcity of willing and capable assistance in using it. Having a little practical knowledge of the use of tools, this lady decided to do her own carpenter work as best she could, rather than wait indef-



STUDY OF AN INTERIOR, BY C. W. CLARK.

panels covers the entire side of a room from dado to ceiling. The frame is morning glory leaves, buds and flowers.

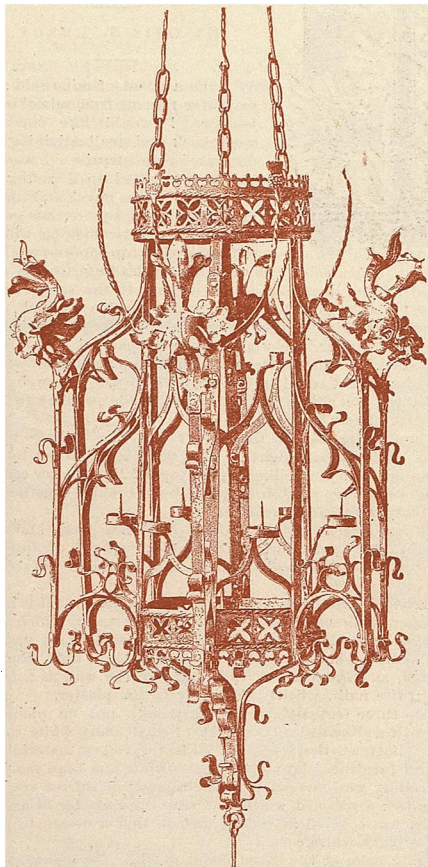
The room has comparatively little bare wall space, the corners on either side of the grate being entirely filled by wide windows, and the opposite side having wide sliding doors, at either side of which are narrow cases from floor to ceiling, for china and bric-a-brac of various sorts. One side of the room is filled with the bands and panels as described. The remaining side has a magnificent piece of carving, a square panel, on which is an oval frame enclosing a head of Dante. There is a door at one side of the panel, and occupying a corresponding space on the other side is a book cabinet, with front of beveled plate glass and heavy oak. The doors of the bookcase, instead of being long, are divided so that each pair opens to give access to two shelves. The lower doors of the cabinet are of carved oak, with small squares of plate glass set in the upper portion. The space between the case and the door in the corner is about nine feet. The carved panel occupies all but the space of a wide

nately for help that might not come for many months. A very large sunny room in one corner of the house had never been finished. The windows and doors and their fittings and moldings were complete, but there was no other woodwork, not even a floor. The original idea had been to finish the entire wall surface in stucco and colors, but an artistic fancy seized the workwoman, which she proceeded to carry out. It so happened that when she was ready to begin operations there was a temporary lack of the flooring she desired to use, and the only alternative was some third rate pine stuff, quite narrow and full of knots and checks, but thoroughly seasoned, it having lain in an out of the way corner of the yard for many years. This was dressed and matched, and, against the earnest protests of the family, who were certain that she never would produce any satisfactory results with such material, it was carried to the empty room.

Some loose boards were laid down and the work bench and tools were put in order. There was an open chimney and a

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place for a grate, and upon a temporary hearth was placed a small cooking stove that had once been used in a summer kitchen, but had been consigned to the attic years before. Upon



GOTHIC CHANDELIER IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM AT MUNICH, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY J. D. OBERNETTER, MUNICH.

the stove was placed a large flat kettle, into which was put a mixture in the proportion of two pounds extract of logwood, boiled by itself for several hours to dissolve thoroughly, to eight ounces salts of tartar and three quarts of rain water. Scraps of old iron, weighing perhaps seven or eight pounds, were then put into a stone jar containing three quarts of vinegar. A quantity of the finest pine sawdust had been sifted and boiled with one-third of its bulk of paper pulp (made from old newspapers, boiled, rinsed and drained to remove all grease or dirt). This mixture was beaten and boiled until thoroughly dissolved, nothing being left but fibre, after which it was dried and pulverized into a sort of fluffy, wooly-looking powder. A sufficient quantity of this was mixed with moderately thin glue, to make a stiff paste, which was beaten and pressed into all of the knots and cracks in the boards, and allowed to dry and harden while other work was going on.

When entirely dry the boards were coated with the logwood stain, applied while quite warm. This was allowed to dry and a second coat of the same preparation was put on, and also dried, after which the iron and vinegar liquid was brushed on in lines with a rattan brush to form the grain. The wood was again thoroughly dried, when it was ready to lay down.

Coarse mortar mixed with broken glass was placed around the edges of the wall and small splinters of glass were thickly set in the mortar and strewn about the spaces in the wall. This was a guard against rats and mice, and answered the purpose perfectly. Of course some assistance in handling the heavy boards was necessary, but my lady did all of the sawing, measuring and fitting, requiring only the help of muscle in her labor.

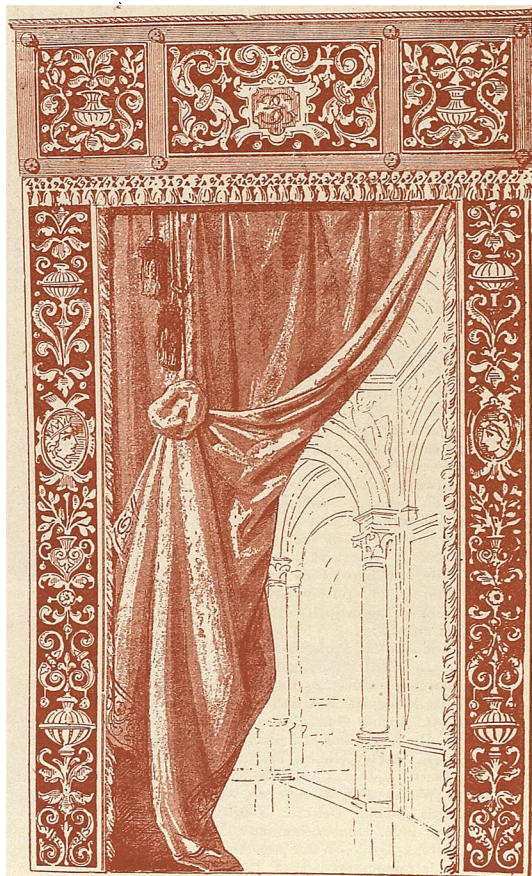
The ceiling was the next undertaking. The room was exactly square and the plan was to have the boards meet in the middle of the ceiling. The ends, therefore, were sawed to a diagonal point and put on in the shape of a single star. To add to the beauty of this work care had been taken that one end of each board should be much lighter in shade than the other, and, as

all of the light colored ends were toward the centre of the star the effect was charming and novel. A gas pipe came through the ceiling where the boards met, and in place of the ordinary ornamental plaster and metal disc that are used for such purposes, there was a small star made from a tiny plate glass mirror with bevelled edges. Around the margin of the star were rows of pendants made from cut crystal drops and balls. These were strung upon very fine wires and fastened into the ceiling with small silvered screw eyes. Before putting these up, however, the ceiling was thoroughly sandpapered and coated with thin varnish, in which was mixed finely powdered rose pink in the proportion of three ounces of powder to one pint of varnish. The walls were next in order, and with the floor and ceiling finished, the work began to be encouraging.

At odd times the base boards were prepared. They were coated with a mixture in the proportion of one gallon of vinegar, one-fourth of a pound of iron rust, one pound of lampblack, and three-fourths of a pound of copperas. The vinegar and rust were put into a stone jar and allowed to stand for ten days, after which the other ingredients were added. When it was ready the first two coats were applied to the boards very hot, the others either heated or not as was most convenient. Five or six coats were applied, the last two with careful sandpapering between. The front of the window and door casings and the doors on the inside were similarly coated and finished with sandpaper.

As there were a number of very pretty and artistic paintings to hang in this room it was decided that the finish of the sides should be as plain as possible. The siding boards were stained with the same mixture as those for the floor and ceiling, but all of one shade, and put up in perpendicular lines, the joints filled with the sawdust pulp before mentioned.

A wide, very heavy molding of wood, treated like the base-board, was put up as a cornice, and a narrow molding to match was designed to hold picture hooks. The mantel was too complicated for the ingenious amateur to undertake, and as the work already done was so much admired by the family and the few friends who were permitted to see it, the head of the house volunteered to have a handsome wood mantel and over-mantel put up if his energetic daughter would finish it to match the



MODERN RENAISSANCE DRAPERY.



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other portions of the woodwork, which she was quite willing to do. The chimney occupied a side of the room where there were neither doors or windows, and it was decided to utilize the space on either side for bookcases and shelves. These were plain, but solid and substantial looking. The upper shelf was about five feet from the floor, and the top of the case about one foot six inches higher, making a space for tall vases or other articles that were to stand on the top of the case. This wood also matched the base board and mantel in color.

When finished the top of the cases extended nearly as far into the room as the edge of the mantel. There were no doors, but slender rods were arranged on which curtains were to be hung. Curtain poles were also provided for the windows.

The rough work was done and the room was cleared of rubbish and thoroughly dusted. The floor was wiped with a damp cloth and given another sandpapering and a coat of each of the preparations. When the surface was dry and the color firmly fixed, the side walls were varnished with the rose pink and varnish, and the base, mantel, bookcases, moldings, door and window casings and curtain poles were coated with boiled oil and polished with a woolen cloth, and afterwards rubbed down with chamois leather. The lustre was perfect and the surface was as fine as ebony, which it exactly resembled. The ceiling and walls were in rosewood finish, several persons insisting that it must be of the genuine wood. The floor, instead of being varnished, was oiled and polished, this process giving it a finish like a mirror, and a color like an old piece of fine rosewood.

Let it be remembered that this was not first class lumber, but what had been looked upon almost as refuse, something that the owner was willing to have spoiled as he supposed, and to which he attached very little importance.

The triumph was the result of patience and perseverance, added to a fair knowledge of the use of tools and chemicals. To fill up all broken places with disintegrated sawdust was to make bad lumber almost as valuable as good lumber could have been for such a purpose. It may be said that this preparation works equally well whether in knots or cracks, in new wood or in furniture that has cracked or split apart. Carefully prepared and used it will fill unsightly gaps, and when dry and polished over can scarcely be detected. It must, however, be made of sawdust from the wood which is to be repaired. Wood fibre and size alone are better for the finest work. The paper may be added to increase the quantity of the material, but is not necessary for the success of the work.

When this room was finished it was declared by an enthusiastic visitor to be "a symphony in ebony and rosewood," and when the furnishing in olive and gold was done, there were no adjectives left in the family vocabulary with which to describe it.

The room has never been thrown open to the public, as the fair carpenter declines to pose before the public as a carpenter until it becomes more fashionable for women to learn that trade, which time she thinks is not far distant.

It is customary to give the surface of stained wood a coat of shellac, but much more elegant and artistic effects may be produced by coating it with boiled oil and rubbing it until a fine gloss is obtained.

IN presenting our readers with this, the initial number of Vol. XII. of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, it is gratifying to be able to say that the Magazine to-day reaches a larger number of readers than ever before in its history, and now has a much larger *clientèle* than any similar publication in the country. With each succeeding month such agencies of distribution as the American News Company, the Manhattan and Brooklyn elevated railways and the various subscription agencies add to their demands upon us, while every mail brings undoubted evidence of the substantial and growing hold the Magazine has obtained upon the esteem of the most intelligent readers, not only at home but in the furthest corners of the globe.

The inside workings of an establishment like this are seldom of public interest, but purely as a matter of curiosity we give a dozen specimen subscriptions taken at random from our mail one day last month:

Alejandro M. Pons, Barcelona, Spain.  
W. R. Wentzer, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia.  
Leo Leipmannsohn, Berlin, Germany.  
Karl Mellqvist, Bjarnaborg, Finland.  
E. G. Rocha, Guanajuato, Mexico.  
W. R. T. Walker, 119 Bunhill Row, London.  
W. A. Bagley, Delhi, Punjab, India.  
Alberto Melo & Co., Puente Sta Anna, City of Mexico.  
G. W. Hardess, Melbourne, Australia.  
Louis Tebbatt Oelinitz, Voightland, Germany.  
Rev. J. H. House, Samokov, Bulgaria.  
Scott & Leslie, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

When it is remembered that these are simply subscriptions from foreign countries and given as matter of geographical curiosity, some idea of the domestic distribution can be formed.



### A NEW YORK GIRL'S DAINTY HOME.

BY OTIS S. LEROY.

LAST June a client of mine said: "My daughter returns from school in September. I would like the third story back and small adjoining room decorated as a surprise. I want the apartment suited to a young girl, something both novel and dainty. The room was square, low ceiling, three rather attic looking windows—it was the top floor—two closet doors, a door leading to the bathroom, and folding doors served as entrance to the second room. A stationary basin, together with white marble mantel piece, completed the original aspect of the place. After repeated efforts and no end of bother, the woodwork was painted ivory white and varnished. A blue white, pale lemon, or cream color seemed the only shade that could be brought within the comprehension of the painter, but finally the old yellow shade peculiar to ivory was the first success achieved.

The next thing—not on the carpet but the ceiling—was to make the windows look higher. This was accomplished by putting transoms from the ceilings to the tops of the window casings. Transoms were made of thin strips of wood braided together and painted ivory white and varnished.

There is a cotton material comes for dress goods known as crazy cloth. In appearance it resembles "crepe" of Japanese manufacture. This was nailed on the wall all round the room as a frieze.

I purchased some material known as cork paper. It is heavy brown paper, with small pieces of cork glued to it, which gives it a rough, gravel-like appearance, and is sometimes used in packing medicine bottles. This was cut out in a bold, Renaissance design, and fastened to the stuff on the wall as a frieze, with long wire nails, which held firmly to the plaster.

A dado three feet deep of the crazy cloth put on plain and covered with a diamond lattice work of small ivory white stripes of wood. Between the frieze and dado the yellow material was plaited and furnished top and bottom with a fine bead molding.

The ceiling was covered with the same stuff shirred very full to the centre; a piece of wood the size in diameter of a small card table, was covered in yellow, and on that a design to fill it out in the ivory white cork.

Swinging poles at the closet doors, so when the doors opened the portieres opened with them, at which was hung yellow and white tassel edging. Between the folding doors the hangings were of yellow brocade silk. Window curtains of white dotted muslin tied back with broad white satin ribbon. Sash curtains of yellow silk.

The wash basin was turned into a dressing table by having a carpenter make a wooden top, which was movable, covered with dotted muslin and lace over yellow, in front of which hung a Venetian mirror.

On the floor was a white straw matting, white bear skin rugs. The main feature of the room was the bed, a small white and gold iron cot, with a rod and crane, over which was hung white Japanese silk, lined with dotted muslin, a quilt with gold embroidery to match. It stood on a small platform about eight inches from the floor, with three wide but very shallow steps all round. It gave the room a stately appearance, taking away the bedroom look.

The furniture, bureau, French bureau, cheval mirror, corner chairs and rocker were all of white and gold, upholstered in odd pieces of Louis XIV. silks.

A bisque candelabra, hung from the centre, dainty china ornaments and a white silk Japanese robe served as decorations for the mantel.

The toilet set for bureau was made of cheap hemstitched handkerchiefs, fastened together with insertion over yellow, with bottle mats and cushion to match. I might add—*par parenthese*—using the handkerchiefs in this way, is a most excellent idea. They can be bought very cheap that will answer this purpose, and when initialled can be made up with lace and insertion in table and bureau scarfs with small labor and expense.

The second room being dark, had a skylight, woodwork painted pale gray green, a gay paper, covered with large, good natured, jolly-looking flowers, an open fireplace, two old inlaid cabinets filled with bric-a-brac, upright piano across the corner, where a most seductive light came down on the music in a way that absolutely implored one to practice. Turkish rugs on a green matting, a catch-all kind of a studio room, a lay-down-and-read sort of a place, which ought to charm any girl home from school.

